



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: April 9, 2012

To: Honorable Betsy Hodges, Chair Ways & Means Committee

Referral: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **West Broadway Alternatives Analysis Grant Application**

Recommendation:

That the proper City officers be authorized to submit an application for federal Alternatives Analysis Program funding to conduct an alternatives analysis for transit improvements in the West Broadway corridor.

Previous Directives:

- February 15, 2012 – City Council approved comments on the scope of issues to be studied in the Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- October 11, 2011 – T&PW received and filed a presentation by Metro Transit on the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study.
- July 2, 2010 – City Council authorized the proper city officers to submit an application for federal grant funds to conduct an alternatives analysis for an initial streetcar line within the Nicollet Avenue and Central Avenue corridors.
- April 2, 2010 – City Council approved the long-term streetcar network as defined in the Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study Final Report dated December 2007.
- March 23, 2010 – T&PW received and filed the Minneapolis Streetcar Funding Study.
- January 22, 2008 – T&PW received and filed Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study Final Report dated December 2007.

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Approved by:

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Anna Flintoft, Transportation Planner

Reviews:

Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	September 22, 2011
Civil Rights Affirmative Action Plan:	Not Applicable
Policy Review Group (PRG):	Not Applicable

Financial Impact

A 20% local match is required; this match will be split evenly among the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council.

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not applicable

City Goals: CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Comprehensive Plan: Improving the quality of transit service on the Primary Transit Network is consistent with the transportation goals in the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Background/Supporting Information

In 2008, the City of Minneapolis completed the *Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study* to determine if implementation of streetcar in existing bus corridors could improve the quality of transit service and increase ridership, as well as catalyze economic development. Fourteen of the most heavily used bus corridors in Minneapolis were evaluated, and a long-term network of seven corridors was identified. One of the corridors in this long-term network follows West Broadway Avenue beginning at the Robbinsdale Transit Center and enters downtown Minneapolis on Washington Avenue N and Nicollet Mall.

In 2009, the Metropolitan Council updated its 2030 Transportation Policy Plan and recommended implementation of a new transitway mode – arterial bus rapid transit or “rapid bus” – on nine arterial corridors with promising ridership potential, but narrow rights-of-way. To advance this concept, in 2011, Metro Transit began the *Arterial Transitway Corridors Study* (ATCS). One of the ATCS corridors follows West Broadway Avenue beginning at the Robbinsdale Transit Center and enters downtown on Lyndale Avenue N and 7th Street N. Preliminary results presented at public open houses in February and March 2012 included a recommendation to proceed with further study of rapid bus on West Broadway Avenue.

In February 2012, the City of Minneapolis provided comments on the scope of issues to be studied in the Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In the comments, the City expressed concerns that the two most promising LRT alignments both have significant negative impacts on the North Minneapolis community: (1) because the D1 LRT alignment largely bypasses North Minneapolis and (2) because the D2 LRT alignment doesn’t physically fit into the existing, narrow street rights-of-way on West Broadway and Penn Avenue N without significant impacts to homes and traffic lanes. In contrast streetcar or rapid bus on West Broadway would directly serve the North Minneapolis community and fit within existing street rights-of-way because, unlike LRT, streetcar and rapid bus operate primarily in mixed traffic lanes. As a result, one of the City’s DEIS comments was that, separate from the Bottineau Transitway project, the Twin Cities region pursue arterial transitway improvements (streetcar or rapid bus) on West Broadway Avenue.

The next step for determining appropriate transit improvements for West Broadway Avenue is to conduct an alternatives analysis. The Federal Transit Administration Alternatives Analysis (AA) competitive grant program – for which the City of Minneapolis was awarded a \$900,000 grant in 2010 for the Nicollet-Central AA study and for which Metro Transit was awarded a \$600,000 grant in 2011 for the Midtown/Lake Street AA study – is accepting applications for 2012. Applications are due April 19, 2012. A 20% local match is required. Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County have agreed to split the local costs three ways.

Public Works staff is requesting Council approval to submit an application for federal Alternatives Analysis Program funding to conduct an alternatives analysis for transit improvements in the West Broadway corridor.